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Indictment of Scientologists' Alleged Spy Told

BY BILL FARR
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A Church of Scientology member accused by authorities of "infiltrating" the state attorney general's office as a secretary was secretly indicted two months ago by the Los Angeles County Grand Jury, The Times learned Wednesday.

Linda Polameni, 34, of Los Angeles was charged in the Oct. 6 indictment with stealing government documents from the 3580 Wilshire Blvd. offices where she worked.

She had been arrested Sept. 12 as she was leaving the high-rise building that houses the attorney general's main Southern California offices.

Miss Polameni has delayed entering a plea to the felony charge pending the outcome of a hearing scheduled next Wednesday before Paul Breckinridge, supervising judge of the Superior Court's criminal division.

Dep. Dist. Atty. Vicki Mitchell, the prosecutor in the case, said the hearing will deal with a defense demurrer claiming the crime was not committed because photocopying of documents does not constitute theft.

Miss Polameni's attorney, Mark Vincent Kaplan, said he also will ask for a post-indictment preliminary hearing so he can question in open court the witnesses who testified secretly before the grand jury.

Prosecutor Mitchell declined to say how the authorities came to suspect Miss Polameni as an "infiltrator" and Kaplan said he has not yet been given that information by the investigators.

But it is obvious from the grand jury transcript that she had been under suspicion prior to Sept. 12 because Miss Polameni's boss, Dep. Atty. Gen. Patricia Kitching, and another deputy in the office, William Pounders, intentionally put together a package of "both accurate and false information" on the Church of Scientology and gave the secretary access to it on that date.

Kitching was involved in a Riverside County matter relating to the tax-exempt status of the Church of Scientology, and Pounders is handling a Scientology suit against the attorney general's office.

The basis of the suit is the church's claim that attorney general's investigators placed informants within the Scientology organization.

As the work day ended and Kitching left the office, Miss Polameni was under surveillance from several vantage points, according to the grand jury transcript.

Special agent Thomas Vernon Wadkins was on the ninth floor of the nearby Travelers Building watching her through binoculars.

Wadkins testified that he saw her enter Kitching's office at 5:30 p.m. and take a large envelope from a filing cabinet there.

She was then observed operating the Xerox machine by another special agent, Paul Tulleners, who was positioned in the ceiling above the sixth floor copy room.

Tulleners told the grand jurors that he used a small six-power spotting scope to observe the eight pages of documents dealing with Scientology that Miss Polameni copied.

Agents Arthur Longuevan and Wilfred Montgrain along with a clerk, Gail Maston, were at strategic locations to observe Miss Polameni for most of this period, according to their testimony.

After Miss Polameni reportedly was observed returning the confidential documents to Kitching's office and placing the copies in her purse, Tulleners transmitted a "code green" to his fellow agents.

Dep. Dist. Atty. Donald Eastman, who presented the case to the grand jury, asked Longuevan what "code green" meant.

"It meant that she had done what we expected her to do," the agent testified.

When the code signal came over the walkie talkies, agents Phil Holnback and David Keyte intercepted Miss Polameni near the entrance to the building. The photocopies were

found in her purse, agents testified. The agents also confiscated a diary from the purse and Eastman introduced it into evidence during the grand jury hearing.

He noted for grand jurors excerpts taken from the diary. Addressing the jury, Eastman said, "The first page in handwriting (reads), 'Wonder if I would have just gotten in any way possible, maybe I could have gotten the materials.'"

Then he mentioned a Jan. 12 entry which said, "By June, 1977, be well into the cycle, creating a whole new game. By the end of 1977 be ready to move out of the AG's office. Big money."

Next was a June 16 entry, which read: "Postulate: Found materials needed so I can terminate project. Need to isolate and locate area so all cycles can be finished."

On July 29, the diary noted that she had given notice of leaving the attorney general's office and the comment: "Hopefully, the next 24 days will show there was no cause for alarm."

Her purse also contained several newspapers clippings about the FBI's massive July raids on Church of Scientology offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

The material seized by the FBI at the Scientology locations on both coasts included CIA and IRS documents marked secret.

The raid on the church's offices was conducted by the FBI in connection with investigation of alleged conspiracies to infiltrate government agencies, burglarize government offices and "bug" federal property.